

Having thus described the invention, I claim:

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Abstract of the Disclosure

Methods and apparatus are described which provide secure interactive communication of text and image information between a central server computer and one or more client computers located at remote sites for the purpose of storing and retrieving files describing and identifying unique products, services, or individuals. Textural information and image data from one or more of the remote sites are stored separately at the location of the central server computer, with the image data being in compressed form, and with the textural information being included in a relational database with identifiers associated with any related image data. Means are provided at the central computer for management of all textural information and image data received to ensure that all information may be independently retrieved. Requests are entered from remote terminals specifying particular subject matter, and the system is capable of responding to multiple simultaneous requests. Textural information is recalled and downloaded for review, along with any subsequently requested image data, to be displayed at a remote site. Various modes of data and image formatting are also disclosed, including encryption techniques to fortify data integrity. The server computers may be interfaced with other computers to effect financial transactions, and images representing the subjects of transactions may be uploaded to the server computer to create temporary or permanent records of financial or legal transactions.